

History

The pioneer history of Round Top Mountain begins on October 19, 1905 with a homestead patent from the United States of America to Mr. Iry Adles.

In 1998, Ardela Vaughn was interviewed. She was a life-long resident of Newton County and one of the few people who knew Iry Adles. She told of his life here and stories of why he might have come to this area.

Iry Adles was a Polish immigrant who came to New York to study medicine and did his internship at a New York hospital. Rumor has it that Dr. Adles was involved in a dispute with a fellow doctor, regarding a young woman. In the end, the other doctor was murdered. It is believed that he fled and settled at Round Top Mountain which at that time, was an unpopulated and remote area of the country.

He practiced holistic medicine and was credited with saving several lives in Newton County, including Mrs. Vaughn's mother. Dr. Adles was very cordial and helpful when approached, but for the most part he stayed to himself and spent much of his time working in his vegetable and herb gardens. Even today, there is still evidence of his garden patch at the top of Round Top Mountain.

Dr. Adles lived at Round Top for many years. One day, in the late 1920's, he was found dead in his cabin. The exact year of his death is unknown. It is believed, he was the victim of a rattlesnake bite. In 1935, the ownership of Round Top Mountain reverted back to the state. In the years following, ownership of the land changed many times.

Round Top Mountain remained a tranquil secluded area of the Ozarks until February 6, 1948. On that foggy cold night, a B-25 Bomber crashed into the side of the mountain killing all five of its military passengers. The crash site has been marked with a memorial honoring those men. An engine and some small debris remain as a reminder of that tragic event.

On March 19, 1997, The Newton County Resource Council became owners of Round Top Mountain. The land was donated by Mr. Bill Stiritz. Since then, extensive effort has gone into construction of hiking trails, a visitors center, and restroom facilities. There are many improvements planned for this site.

This photograph was taken at South Gap in early spring. This trail offers spectacular views and a variety of wildflowers for your enjoyment.

Round Top Mountain

Scenic Hiking Trail



Trail Map

Total trail length: 4 miles round trip

Geology

Archaeology

The mountains were once a flat plain of sedimentary material laid down layer upon layer. This sedimentary layering was created when this entire area was covered by an ocean or inland sea.

Man has lived in these hills for at least 10,000 years. Little is known about the earliest inhabitants because they left little behind. Stone tools and weapons are the main artifacts left from these earliest people.

These sedimentary layers were compressed and, in time, hardened into stone. If you will look at the rock bluff on one side of a valley, then look across the valley to the opposite bluff, you will see that each bluff line contains the same rock layers at the same elevation. Water has worn out the areas between these current bluff lines forming the valleys between.

On the Round Top Hiking Trail, the most obvious reminder that people lived on this mountain is the Bluff Shelter near the South end of the Loop Trail. This shelter was inhabited by the Ozark Bluff Dwellers. Signs that this shelter was inhabited include flint chips, ash in the soil, and fire blackened rock. This shelter was probably not inhabited year-round as it is small and there is no constant water source nearby.

The bluff line on Round Top is formed from the Atoka sandstone formation. It contains numerous rounded white quartz pebbles that can easily be seen on the North Bluff Overlook. Below the Atoka sandstone layer, lies the Bloyd Formation. This rock layer is evident at the geology viewpoint on the north loop. It consists of various types of shale and Kessler Limestone.

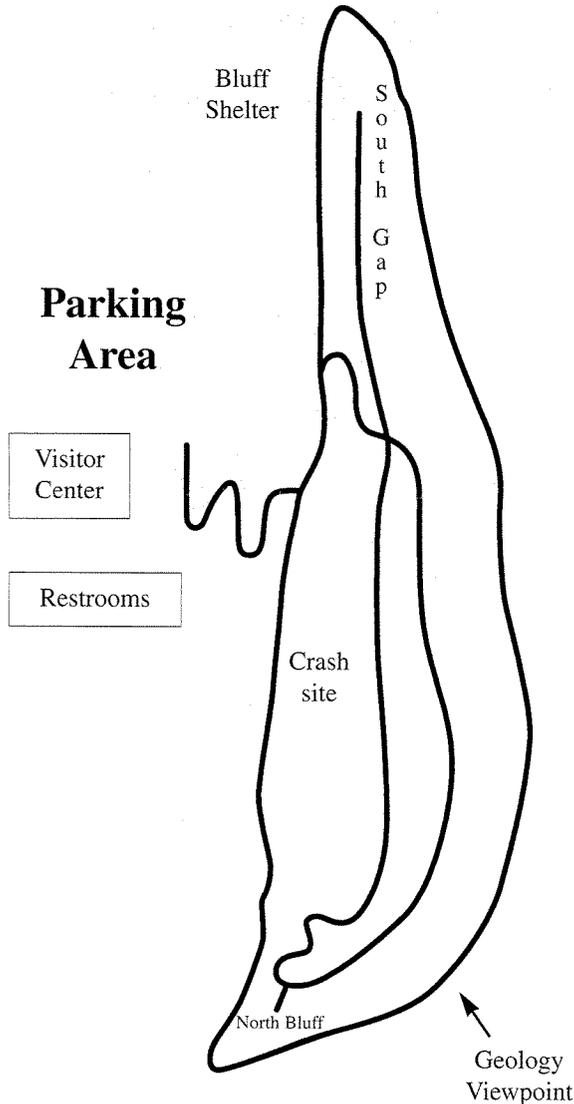
These people were farmers who raised corn, squash, beans, and pumpkins. They hunted game and gathered food of all kinds including nuts, berries, and acorns. Their principle weapon was the atlatl and was used long after the bow and arrow had become common in other parts of North America. They made pottery, basketry, woven cloth, and tanned the hides of the game that they killed. It is thought that they lived in small family groups as no evidence of large settlements has been found.

This hiking trail also offers evidence of ancient sea life. Check the rocks at the geology viewpoint on the north loop. You will find the fossil remains of mollusks and the bolt-like fossils of crinoids. Also evident are scale tree fossils that can be seen at the South Gap and other places along the trail.

There is much debate concerning the time period that the Ozark Bluff Dwellers lived here; however, it is generally thought that the Ozark Bluff Dwellers were gone by the time of European contact in the 1500's. It is unknown what happened to these people or where they went, but some theories include drought, famine, and war with neighboring peoples.

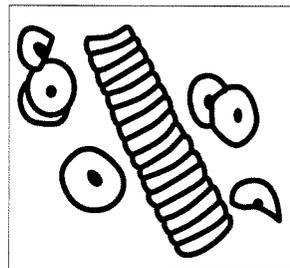
After the Ozark Bluff Dwellers left this area, other people moved in. It is thought that the Osage tribe inhabited the area by the 1500's and remained until the early 1800's. After the Osage, the Cherokee people settled in the area and held title to the land until 1828.

In the late 1830's, thousands of Cherokees were forced off of their land in the east and moved to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). This movement, now known as the Trail of Tears, came near this area and some small groups are thought to have come through Newton County. There are many local people who can trace their heritage to the Cherokee people who settled in this area.



For your convenience, there are over 30 benches distributed throughout the trail.

If you would like more information call us at (870) 446-5898.



Fragments of Crinoid fossils
These fossils were once stems of an ancient form of sea life which was similar to modern day "sea lilies".

Scale Tree fossil pattern

The fossilized bark of the scale tree looks similar to this. The Lepidodendron tree was actually a large "tree like" plant. Some grew up to 180 ft. tall.

